



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

January 14, 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: JOHN BERRY
Director

SUBJECT: Special Solicitation for Haitian Earthquake Relief

The earthquake that hit Haiti on January 12th came without warning and brought death and destruction on a scale that is difficult to comprehend. We are all moved, and after the quake struck, the United States and other nations immediately began relief operations for the Haitian people.

Every Federal worker can help.

As our thoughts and prayers went to this island nation not far from our shores, individual Feds throughout the government asked what they could do. Federal workers have always shown their generosity when disaster strikes, and this time is no different. To make it easier for Feds to give, I am authorizing department and agency heads to allow a special solicitation of Federal employees at the workplace to support Haiti in its time of extraordinary need.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has recommended cash contributions as the most effective way to help. Special solicitations will allow Federal employees to assist the ongoing relief efforts in Haiti with a one-time cash or check donation, outside the normal Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) procedures. USAID has provided a list of relief organizations and further information on its website at http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/haiti/eq/. In addition, a list of frequently asked questions and answers on special solicitations is attached.

While special solicitations are the best option for Federal employees to provide relief assistance through the workplace, employees can also provide assistance by giving directly to charities involved in relief efforts, regardless of whether the charities participated in their local CFC. Federal employees can contact relief organizations directly or visit their websites if a special solicitation is not offered in their workplace.

If you decide to conduct a special solicitation, please contact OPM's Office of CFC Operations (OCFCO) to let us know of your efforts, including which charity or charities you selected for donations and how much was donated. The OCFCO is also available to assist you in the development and implementation of such efforts, and to respond to questions about the special solicitation donation process. The OCFCO can be contacted at (202) 606-2564 or at cfc@opm.gov.

As we join President Obama and millions of Americans in mourning those who have perished and praying for the survivors and their families, we can also help save lives in the coming days and weeks.

Attachment

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Human Resources Directors

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Special Solicitations For Victims of the Earthquake in Haiti

Q. What is a special solicitation?

A. Federal regulations, set forth at 5 CFR §950.102, state that the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the only authorized solicitation of employees in the Federal workplace on behalf of charitable organizations. Using an exception authority in this regulation, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) may grant permission for special solicitations of Federal employees, outside of the CFC, in support of victims in cases of emergencies and disasters.

Q. Does the Head of the Agency still need to provide a written request?

A. No. OPM Director John Berry has authorized government-wide solicitations for disaster relief efforts at the agency directors' discretion.

Q. Is there a list of organizations providing relief assistance in the affected areas?

A. Information on organizations providing disaster relief can be found on the U.S. Agency for International Development website (http://www.usaid.gov/locations/latin_america_caribbean/country/haiti/eq/). Scroll down on this page until you see the section titled "How Can I Help?".

Q. Who conducts the special solicitation?

A. Because the special solicitation is outside of the CFC, the Federal department, agency, or component conducting the solicitation is responsible for the oversight and administration of the collection of contributions. OPM recommends that Federal departments and agencies holding a special solicitation request that the charities receiving funds from the solicitation be responsible for the collection and substantiation of all contributions.

Q. Can employees use a CFC pledge card to contribute during a special solicitation?

A. No. The special solicitation is not part of the CFC. Employees should receive instructions on how to make a special solicitation pledge by the Federal department or agency overseeing the solicitation.

Q. Are the CFC fiscal agents known as Principal Combined Fund Organizations (PCFO) required to maintain records of special solicitations conducted by Federal departments and agencies in their campaign areas?

A. No. Federal agencies and charities receiving the funds from the special solicitation are responsible for maintaining records of the solicitation. However, the Local Federal Coordinating Committees (LFCC) responsible for oversight of the local CFC in their area and the PCFOs are encouraged to cooperate with Federal agencies within their campaign borders to provide assistance for special solicitation efforts, if possible.

Q. I can give more to the special solicitation if I use payroll deduction. Is payroll deduction available for a special solicitation?

A. No. Special solicitations are conducted outside of the CFC procedures. In addition, special solicitations are intended to provide immediate financial assistance to organizations involved in immediate relief efforts for disasters and emergencies. The fastest, most direct way to process special solicitation contributions is in the form of cash or check payable to the recipient charity.

Q. What if a department or agency wants to help a non-CFC participating charity involved in disaster relief services?

A. If a Federal agency wants to solicit funds for a charity not listed in the CFC brochure, it may do so in a special solicitation. Again, this collection effort is conducted outside of the CFC through a special solicitation. The CFC has no mechanisms for tracking donations to agencies not identified by a CFC number.

Q. Our department or agency has employees that were directly affected by a disaster. Do we need to seek authorization to collect funds from Federal employees to be given directly to these employees and/or their surviving family members?

A. Your department or agency does not need OPM's authorization for a solicitation to permit collection of funds for this purpose. However, Federal employees only may solicit funds for fellow employees in need subject to established ethics requirements and non-CFC solicitation requests affecting Federal buildings. We strongly encourage you to contact your agency's ethics counsel or General Counsel if you are planning such an activity.

Q. Is this authorization solely for special solicitations for the Haitian Earthquake or can it be used to conduct special solicitations for other emergencies/disasters?

A. The authorization applies only to relief efforts for victims of the Haitian earthquake. For more information on how to request permission to conduct special solicitations in response to other emergencies/disasters, please visit the CFC website (<http://www.opm.gov/cfc/html/faq.asp#emerg>).

Q. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

A. The Office of CFC Operations staff is available to provide technical assistance to Federal agencies and can be reached at (202) 606-2564 or cfc@opm.gov.